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Activities of the Department of Public Information: news services

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report, prepared in accordance with General Assembly resolution 68/86 B, provides a summary of the key advances made by the Department of Public Information from September 2013 to February 2014 in promoting the work of the United Nations to the global audience through its news services.

News services, which is one of three subprogrammes of the Department and is implemented by its News and Media Division, is responsible for strengthening support for the United Nations by enhancing the quality, format and timeliness of information products on the Organization, and for increasing the geographic range and frequency of use of its products by media outlets and other users.

The activities under the other subprogrammes of the Department, namely strategic communications services and outreach and knowledge services, are described in separate reports of the Secretary-General (A/AC.198/2014/2 and A/AC.198/2014/4, respectively).

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 68/86 B, the General Assembly took note of the reports of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Department of Public Information submitted for consideration by the Committee on Information at its thirty-fifth session (A/AC.198/2013/2-4) and requested the Secretary-General to continue to report to the Committee on the activities of the Department.

2. In the same resolution, the General Assembly called upon the Department to provide specific information on a number of its activities. The Bureau of the Committee on Information advised the Department to present the requested information in three parts, in accordance with the three subprogrammes of the Department: strategic communications services, news services and outreach and knowledge services.

3. The present report, which covers the news- and media-related activities of the Department, highlights progress made in the area of radio, television, video, photographic, print and Internet services, including social media, to media and other users globally. There is a particular focus on multilingualism on the Department's website, as well as in all news and media services. In addition, the report presents a proposed approach to language parity in the issuance of press releases. The report also outlines the urgent need for the digitization of the Organization's audiovisual history, so as to prevent the further deterioration of its historical archives, and details the Department's efforts to establish collaborative arrangements for the digitization of the archives in a cost-neutral manner.

4. Unless otherwise indicated, the report covers the activities of the Department for the period from September 2013 to February 2014.

II. News services

A. Overview

5. During the reporting period, the Department focused on leveraging new technology and broadening partnerships as a way to expand the reach and effectiveness of its news products.

6. New technologies installed as part of the capital master plan have allowed the Department to increase the number of meetings webcast in all six official languages, therefore improving the transparency of the Organization.

7. The Department continued its efforts to expand its base of broadcast partners for both radio and television. It also initiated an innovative partnership to deliver, at no cost, United Nations audio content to a global audience.

8. The Department's continuous efforts to find new audiences have expanded into identifying and establishing partnerships with organizations and industries with previously untapped audiences. For example, the Department entered into a partnership with Royal Air Maroc to offer United Nations Television, United Nations Radio and United Nations Photo products on the airline's in-flight entertainment system and magazine, as well as in the airline's terminals, lounges and displays. Similar projects with other potential partners are under way.

B. United Nations Radio

9. United Nations Radio continued its efforts to reach the widest possible audiences in different regions of the world by using a variety of ways, including entering into new partnership arrangements with broadcasters, expanding its presence on the web and on social media outlets and utilizing innovative approaches for programme dissemination, such as telephone-based platforms.

10. Multilingualism is at the centre of United Nations Radio activities, which include the production of regular programmes in the six official languages, as well as Portuguese and Kiswahili, and continuous updates of web pages in multiple languages. In addition, several enhancements in coverage were made through weekly news programmes in Bangla, Hindi and Urdu, which were also made available online. Similar enhancements are under way for the programming in Indonesian, including its dedicated web page.

11. In its programming, United Nations Radio highlighted the full spectrum of the work of the Organization to show, through interviews, reports and accompanying multimedia features, the positive impact of the Organization's efforts on the daily lives of people worldwide.

12. United Nations Radio's efforts to reach new audiences took an important step forward during the reporting period through a cost-free arrangement with AudioNow, a company that provides a service that allows people to listen to a radio station by calling a local phone number, regardless of the station's geographical location. From a landline or mobile phone, audiences in the United States of America can now listen to multilingual programmes and other audio content from across the United Nations system, including news reports, features, in-depth interviews, press briefings and live coverage of meetings and events, available 24 hours a day in eight languages, including all six official languages (the telephone numbers are available on the "United Nations audio by phone" web page on the United Nations Radio website). The pilot phase is focused on the United States and will soon expand to Morocco, South Africa and Switzerland, before being implemented in other countries. The service does not require a smartphone or a dedicated application and uses voice minutes rather than data plans, making it a more affordable way to access such content.

13. The Department's newest fully staffed radio units, Kiswahili and Portuguese, have actively recruited new partners. The Portuguese Unit expanded its year-old cooperation with Globo News TV and launched a new partnership arrangement with TVI channel in Mozambique involving the use of news bulletins and UNifeed images. New partnerships with Portuguese-language broadcasters and media outlets also included Rádio Maranata FM, Observatorio do Terceiro Setor, Trianon AM and TV Channel Net Cidade in Brazil, as well as Rádio Nacional de Angola, Rádio Politécnica in Mozambique and the Lusa Portuguese News Agency in Portugal. The Kiswahili Unit added partnerships with broadcasters in the following countries: Democratic Republic of the Congo (Radio Umoja); Uganda (Spice FM and Kings FM); United Republic of Tanzania (Wapo Radio, Afya Radio, Pangani FM, Jogoo FM, Nuru FM, Sauti ya Injili, Mwangaza FM, Ilasi FM, Orkonerei Radio, Breeze FM, Coconut FM, Shalombroz.blogspot.com and Radio Maisna); and United States (Swahili Radio and TV and Sundayshomari.com).

14. United Nations Radio's Russian Unit entered into a new partnership with Alpha Radio in Belarus, while the Spanish Unit embarked on a special collaboration with the United Nations Information Centre in Bogota, which contributes interviews from the field on a weekly basis. The Arabic Unit recently forged partnerships with Middle East Radio Network in Egypt, Huna Amsterdam in the Netherlands and ZenoRadio in the United States. The French Unit started a new cooperation with La Radio Nationale du Burkina Faso, different community radio stations in Africa and Radio Solidarité (Haiti) in New York.

15. During the reporting period, highlights of United Nations Radio's coverage included:

(a) *The sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly*. There was extensive coverage of the general debate and related high-level events by all language units, and reporting was amplified with special interviews with world leaders attending the session and supplemented with user-friendly links to text and webcast files;

(b) *Central African Republic*. Logistical support was provided for the recording and dissemination in December 2013 of the Secretary-General's message for the people of the Central African Republic following the outbreak of deadly violence. A news focus web page containing content related to the Central African Republic from across the United Nations system was created in both English and French. The efforts of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and United Nations humanitarian agencies were closely covered, especially in French;

(c) *Syrian Arab Republic*. All aspects of United Nations efforts to address the crisis, including actions and statements by the Security Council, the Human Rights Council, the Secretary-General and the Joint Special Representative of the United Nations and the League of Arab States for Syria were covered. There was also extensive coverage of United Nations humanitarian efforts and the work of the Joint Mission of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the United Nations for the Elimination of the Chemical Weapons Programme of the Syrian Arab Republic on the destruction of the country's stockpiles of chemical weapons;

(d) *Tribute to Nelson Mandela*. Advance planning and cross-divisional coordination ensured the timely and comprehensive coverage of the global response to the death of Nelson Mandela, including from across the United Nations system. Historical materials, including audio, video and photo archives, were widely used in news reports and features about the United Nations response to the death of Mr. Mandela and in a wider reflection about the United Nations and the anti-apartheid movement.

C. United Nations Television

16. From the live coverage of official meetings to the production of feature-style television magazines and online video clips, the Department used technological advances in production and distribution to deliver video content on the work of the Organization. To address the needs of clients and users in different parts of the world, particularly developing countries, the Department produced content for standard television purposes, as well as for online videos and social media outreach.

To promote the television and video products of the United Nations, it also partnered with media and non-profit organizations.

17. A web-based series entitled *UN stories* was created to provide shorter video content for multiple web platforms, as well as mobile devices. Produced in the six official languages using existing material and resources and made available through the United Nations website and YouTube channel, the stories highlight the work of the United Nations and its agencies, funds and programmes.

Feature programming

18. The Department continued to enhance the quality and thematic scope of its feature programmes, in part through collaborations with various United Nations entities, while also seeking new partnership arrangements with broadcasters to expand audiences for United Nations Television products.

21st Century

19. Important stories dealing with United Nations priority themes and issues from more than 20 countries were produced locally for the Department's flagship monthly television magazine programme, *21st Century*. In October, one of the segments focused on the key challenges facing South Sudan after independence. In November, the magazine ran a feature based on a project in India showing how improvements in basic sanitation can help to stem the spread of disease.

20. A new partnership with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) was instrumental in the production of three feature stories on the work of human rights special rapporteurs. A partnership with the Office for Disarmament Affairs of the Secretariat led to a feature story dealing with the dangers of weapons of mass destruction. Similar successful partnerships and co-production agreements were carried out with the United Nations Democracy Fund, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Forum on Forests, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and other United Nations entities.

21. A key thrust in the Department's activities was aimed at expanding the series's language versions, already produced in Chinese, English and French. In addition to previous agreements with TV5 Monde and China Business Network, the Department reached an agreement with Sky News Arabia to co-produce an Arabic-language edition. This version is expected to reach 50 million households in the Middle East and North Africa, as well as audiences in Europe (through free-to-air satellite) and the Americas and Australia (through a television content provider). The Department continues to pursue co-production partners to create Russian- and Spanish-language versions. Currently, 116 clients (including broadcast organizations, social media outlets and educational institutions) take *21st Century* either as a complete package or by using individual feature segments.

UN in Action

22. Each month, *UN in Action*, a multilingual three-to-five-minute feature series, highlights the day-to-day activities of the United Nations in different parts of the

world, providing insights into frequently overlooked aspects of the Organization's work to the public at large. *UN in Action* is particularly attractive to television stations seeking fully packaged and ready-to-air video content.

23. Aiming to increase the cost-efficiency and effectiveness of its production, United Nations Television improved access to video content from United Nations field missions and other United Nations sources on the ground. In exchange for material received from United Nations entities, United Nations Television adapts its videos for *UN in Action* and disseminates them in the six official languages using the Department's global network of partnerships with media outlets. In the past year, the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti, as well as such agencies as the International Atomic Energy Agency, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, OHCHR, UNFPA, UNIDO and the United Nations University, substantially increased their support and contributions to the series.

24. As an example of its ongoing efforts to capitalize on the opportunities presented by social media networks to expand the reach of programming in traditional media, the Department distributed the Chinese version of *UN in Action* through such sites as Weibo, Sina Video, Youku, Tudou and Tencent Video. Within minutes, most of the stories quickly spread, helping to introduce video content to new audiences. According to the statistics available in late 2013, those videos alone had more than 250,000 views.

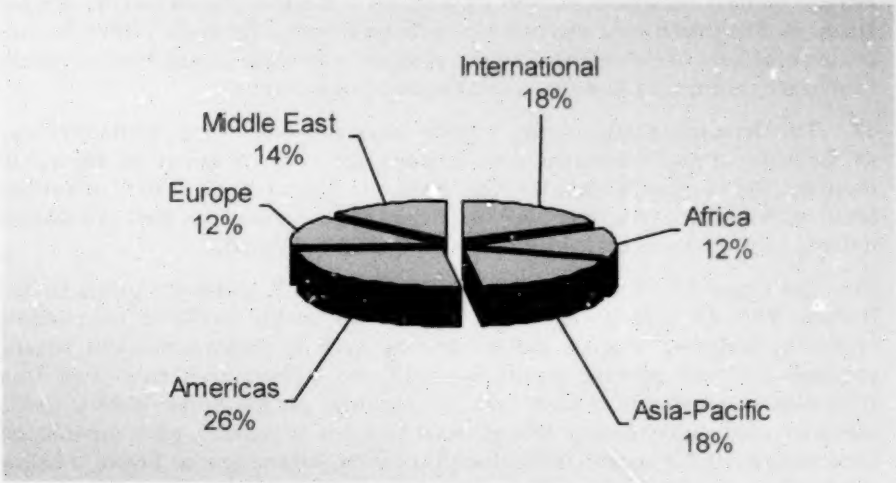
Live coverage

25. United Nations Television provides gavel-to-gavel broadcast-quality live feeds to broadcasters around the world of the meetings of the General Assembly and the Security Council and other intergovernmental and major events, as well as press conferences and encounters at Headquarters in New York and the United Nations Office at Geneva. Coverage is also made available through the United Nations Television channel on Time Warner cable in the greater New York area and through United Nations webcast. During the general debate of the General Assembly held in September 2013, United Nations Television covered some 180 events, frequently with simultaneous live feeds.

UNifeed

26. UNifeed delivered video news stories six days a week through Associated Press Television News to more than 1,000 broadcast points globally, with content from Headquarters and more than 40 agencies, funds and programmes, as well as United Nations peacekeeping and political missions. Select stories were also distributed by Reuters TV and the European Broadcasting Union (see figure I).

Figure I
UNifeed clients by region, October 2013



27. In addition, UNifeed made broadcast-quality videos available on its website for smaller broadcasters, mostly in Africa, which are not subscribers of Associated Press Television News or Reuters TV. Registered users include media professionals, government agencies, non-governmental organizations and educational institutions. On average, there are about 2,000 downloads monthly. Some of the downloaded UNifeed content is redistributed further through registered users online and social media platforms.

28. During the reporting period, UNifeed coverage of the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic remained the most popular among broadcasters, especially in the Middle East and Europe. A story on Syrian refugees was used by nearly 300 subscribers. The most popular general-interest news story of the year originated from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and focused on edible insects, registering more than 120 on-air broadcasts.

Webcasting

29. Thanks in part to the roll-out of the new technology in the Conference Building funded as part of the capital master plan, the Department was able to improve and expand its live and on-demand webcast services available through the United Nations Web TV site (http://webtv.un.org).

30. In response to the request of the General Assembly in paragraph 64 of its resolution 68/86 B, the Department took steps to provide live webcast coverage in the six official languages of all open meetings of the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. The Department continues to search for possible solutions to provide access to archived videos in all official languages. This includes working with an outside provider to explore related technical solutions.

31. In addition to webcast coverage of meetings held at United Nations Headquarters and of Human Rights Council meetings held in Geneva, the

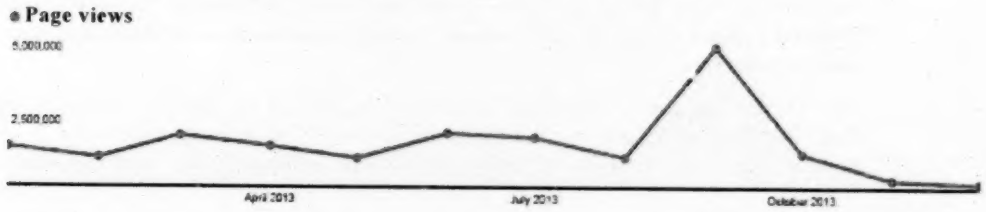
Department's webcast site now includes coverage of proceedings at the International Court of Justice held in The Hague. All court hearings are now available live and on demand on the United Nations Web TV website, in English, French and the original language. The Department also provides webcast coverage for major United Nations conferences held worldwide and is in discussions with other United Nations offices to enhance the capacity to webcast live United Nations events.

32. The Department's webcasting services were also used as a cost-effective way to facilitate internal communication through the live streaming of town hall meetings with senior officials in New York and United Nations staff at various locations worldwide. Archived webcast videos of such events, as well as recorded training sessions, are accessed with growing frequency by staff.

33. The Department's ongoing efforts to improve the functionality of the United Nations Web TV website and make the service readily available on multiple platforms, including wireless mobile devices, such as smartphones and tablets, continues to yield positive results. In 2013, the website registered more than 17 million page views from users from 215 countries and territories. Website traffic was particularly heavy during the high-level period in September, when the webcast team made available about 6,000 video clips for on-demand access. Figure II below illustrates trends in monthly traffic and geographical spread.

Figure II

United Nations Web TV trends in monthly traffic and geographical spread, 1 January-23 December 2013



Country territory		*Number of page views*	*Percentage*
1.	United States of America	5 887 735	32.62
2.	China	834 679	4.62
3.	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	796 692	4.41
4.	Switzerland	719 520	3.99
5.	Canada	699 939	3.88
6.	Germany	509 790	2.82
7.	Chile	498 142	2.76
8.	France	475 278	2.63
9.	Serbia	346 626	1.92
10.	Japan	321 366	1.78

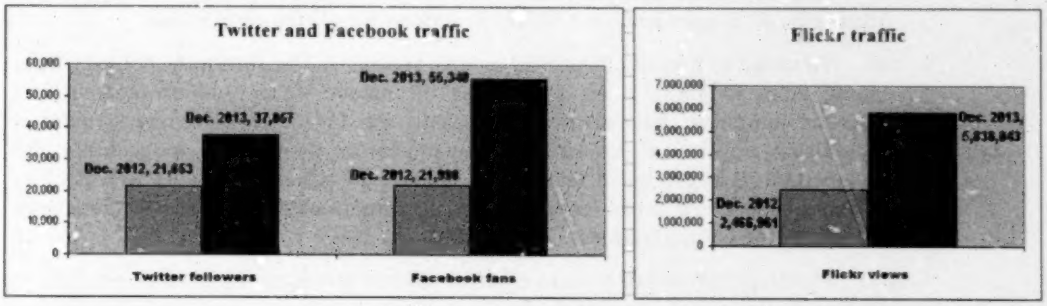
D. Photos and audiovisual archives

United Nations Photo

34. Demand for United Nations Photo content continued to be high during the reporting period. Some 470 assignments were undertaken, resulting in about 3,300 images being selected and made available to the public in high resolution on the United Nations Photo website. In total, at least 20,000 images were added to the photo database, 5 per cent more than for the same reporting period in the previous year. The Photo Library provided more than 18,000 images upon request to permanent missions and members of the public.

35. The United Nations Photo website registered more than 2.6 million unique page views during the reporting period. Visitors from 200 countries and territories downloaded more than 60,000 photos in high resolution for publication, distribution and other uses.

Figure III
Traffic on United Nations Photo social media channels



36. In addition to the coverage of current news, the Department has been working to make historical photos available to the public in digital format. An additional 3,300 of these legacy images that had been digitized were retouched, captioned and published during the reporting period.

Audiovisual archives and library services

37. With the goal of digitizing and preserving the audiovisual collections that reflect the history of the Organization, as well as the League of Nations, the Department has made various efforts to seek out potential donors with a view to funding the mass or partial digitization of the United Nations audiovisual archives. Proposals have been presented to interested Member States, international broadcasters, foundations and other entities. In addition, there have been collaborative initiatives with professional organizations and national archives. While these efforts have not yet resulted in any projects being implemented, the Department will continue to seek creative partnerships that will bring the funding or technical expertise necessary for the sustainable management of the Organization's audiovisual archives.

38. The Department believes that a sound and effective digitization programme for the Organization's audiovisual archives must take into account two major goals: to

fulfil immediate accessibility needs and to make sure that this heritage will be accessible well into the future.

39. The immediate accessibility goal for new materials has been realized with the implementation of the media assets management system in the third quarter of 2013. By capturing and managing new audiovisual recordings and Department productions in digital format, the system also provides the infrastructure and tools to support the ingestion and management of the historical audiovisual collections. The implementation of the system and the new permanent broadcast facilities as part of the capital master plan renovations has brought many changes to the life cycle of audiovisual recording at Headquarters. "Born-digital" records are now generated, stored, distributed and managed centrally in an environment shared by several departments (the Department of Public Information, the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management and the Office of Central Support Services), resulting in greater efficiency and better use of resources. The long-term preservation and accessibility of these audiovisual records, however, need to be addressed. A sound backup system, as well as long-term audiovisual archives migration policies and procedures, will have to be in place to support a sustainable and compliant open archives information system. The Department will work with other relevant departments and offices to address these long-term issues.

40. The need to preserve historical archives remains. The shift in technology from analog tapes to digital files, as well as the natural decay and obsolescence of playback equipment, have created many challenges for the effective management of audiovisual archives, which have had an impact on their future accessibility and preservation. It is estimated that analog media will not be accessible within 10 to 15 years. This could mean losing historically irreplaceable moments in the shared heritage of the United Nations.

41. The Department has utilized external service providers as much as possible to digitize formats not supported by the in-house system. That includes legacy audiovisual formats, such as 16-mm and 35-mm films, as well as one-inch video tapes and other standards that are becoming obsolete.

42. However, this approach has proven costly and ineffective because it creates gaps in the overall collection and makes it more difficult to determine what has been digitized. It also places additional pressure on the original materials that must be handled multiple times to fulfil incoming requests.

43. A long-term approach can be achieved more cost-effectively through the mass digitization of the entire collection, where a master long-term preservation copy can be created and used to generate working copies to service various needs of production and distribution through traditional or new channels, such as the web, while safeguarding the original for long-term preservation.

44. A proposed strategy is included in the annex to the present report. It should be noted that digital preservation and access activities related to the United Nations Library Digital Repository are being undertaken by the Department's Outreach Division, which includes the Dag Hammarskjöld Library at United Nations Headquarters, and are reflected in its report to the Committee on Information (A/AC.198/2014/4). The Department is coordinating these digitization efforts to ensure coherence and to maximize the benefits of any related initiatives.

45. The value of making available the historical audiovisual archives that the Department manages was illustrated by an exhibition held in New York during the reporting period, in partnership with the Gabarron Foundation. The exhibition, entitled "UNEARTH", showcased selected historical photos, posters, audio recordings and films and videos portraying the work of the Organization over seven decades. Opened on 29 October, the World Day for Audiovisual Heritage, the exhibition is expected to travel to other cities to help raise awareness of the work of the Organization and the value of audiovisual archives.

E. United Nations News Centre

46. The multilingual United Nations News Centre portal continued to offer timely, accurate and balanced news coverage of the latest developments at United Nations Headquarters and around the United Nations system and to serve as a one-stop gateway to a wide array of related materials and in-depth resources.

47. One of the most heavily visited areas of the United Nations website (www.un.org), the portal gained new audiences over the reporting period. For example, visitors to the English United Nations News Centre site increased by approximately 11 per cent compared with the previous year, while the number of visitors to the French version increased by 18 per cent. From 1 September to 21 December 2013, the Arabic News Centre had more than 147,000 page views, representing a 63 per cent increase over the same period in 2012. As in the past, news stories from the portal continued to receive high ranking in search results on United Nations-related issues on Google News and other search engines. They were also widely picked up by United Nations system and external websites, including media outlets, non-governmental organizations, think tanks, academic and educational institutions and specialized publications.

48. In its reporting, the portal's news service strove to cover the widest possible range of issues and developments from the Organization's work, from peace and security crises to sustainable development and human rights. In addition to up-to-the-minute reporting on breaking news, the coverage involved feature stories, interviews and compilation of resources through the portal's "News focus" pages, including on such topics as Haiti, Mali and the Syrian Arab Republic. In response to developments on chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic, all the relevant information was incorporated into the Syrian "News focus" page, offering easy access to related content, including links to the website of the Joint Mission of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the United Nations.

49. Further developing another popular feature, the *Newsmakers* series of in-depth interviews, the United Nations News Centre gave prominence to the activities of such personalities as the President of the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly; the President of the World Bank Group; the Executive Director of the World Food Programme; the United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator; and the United Nations Special Envoy for Global Education. Given the recent developments in the field of disarmament, a detailed interview with the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs provided an important retrospective of the year's accomplishments and challenges. In line with the Department's efforts to produce content in the widest possible range of official languages, an exclusive interview

with the United Nations Senior Coordinator for the Cholera Response in Haiti was conducted in English, French and Spanish and posted on the News Centre website.

50. The United Nations News Centre continues to highlight issues in creative ways and on subjects outside the hard news cycle to appeal to the widest possible range of audiences around the world, including youth, while highlighting issues that are often underreported by mainstream media. In this regard, there was a series of feature stories on the United Nations political missions and a number of interviews, videos and features in connection with the tenth session of the United Nations Forum on Forests, held in Istanbul, Turkey. Furthermore, the News Centre worked closely with United Nations agencies to raise the profile of particular initiatives. For example, a video series entitled *Vox Pop* featured special rapporteurs speaking on a range of human rights topics, including efforts to combat violence against women and girls.

F. Press releases

51. In accordance with paragraph 19 of resolution 68/86 B, the Department undertook an in-depth review of the possibilities, including resources, in order to develop a strategy to issue press releases in all six official languages. The Department also held informal discussions with Member State delegations to share information on the efforts being made to ensure language parity, as requested in several resolutions.

52. Further to its pilot project to translate press releases from English to Spanish, the Department continued to explore options to implement language parity in the issuance of press releases. Moreover, in an effort to cover meetings in more cost-effective ways, the Department has explored the possibility of using new technologies, but has not yet found tools adapted to producing meetings coverage summaries while achieving the necessary time and quality criteria.

53. It is worth noting that, for several decades, Member States have provided resources for the production of press releases, initially in English and subsequently in French. The Department has not received additional resources to gradually phase in the issuance of press releases in other official languages. In the absence of adequate resources to produce and issue press releases in all six official languages, the Department proposes an initial approach towards fulfilling that requirement. On the basis of statistics that show a high demand for and usage of United Nations information materials in Spanish, the Department will plan to start issuing press releases in Spanish by redistributing the resources presently available only for English and French.

54. As a result, press releases issued in three official languages, namely English, French and Spanish, would cover mainly three principal organs: the General Assembly (plenary meetings), the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council (substantive sessions).

55. During the reporting period, coverage of meetings remained an important element of the Department's news-related services, and the Department continued to provide fast, accurate and comprehensive coverage of all open intergovernmental meetings and press conferences at Headquarters and other locations. Between July and December 2013, the Meetings Coverage Section produced a total of 2,146 press releases, with 9,832 pages in English and French. This output included meetings

coverage summaries (641), other press releases (1,127) and briefings and press conferences (378).

56. The coverage, which is made available in hard copy at Headquarters and distributed to worldwide audiences through the Internet and the United Nations information centres, included:

(a) A total of 405 press releases relating to the main session of the General Assembly, including plenary meetings and meetings of the Main Committees, as well as high-level meetings on the realization of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities, on sustainable development and on nuclear disarmament, held from mid-September to December 2013;

(b) A total of 317 press releases covering the Security Council, including a ministerial-level meeting on the impact of illicit transfers of small arms and light weapons, substantive debates on Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali/Sahel, Somalia, the Sudan/South Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, the Middle East, post-conflict peacebuilding, children and armed conflict, non-proliferation, peace and security in Africa, the international criminal tribunals, women and peace and security, and the protection of civilians, as well as press statements and other press releases;

(c) A total of 972 other press releases, including statements, remarks and messages from the Secretary-General and the Deputy Secretary-General, as well as materials from other United Nations offices and departments.

III. Other services

Services to the media: media accreditation and liaison

57. During the general debate of the General Assembly and the high-level meetings, the Department processed approximately 1,550 media accreditation applications, facilitated 118 photo opportunities with the Secretary-General and various dignitaries and monitored and provided logistics to 40 stake-outs and press conferences and 76 events at United Nations Headquarters. It also assisted journalists and escorted crews to media booths in the temporary General Assembly Hall and other rooms, with the help of 46 volunteers speaking a wide range of languages. The Department facilitated access to the temporary "press island", where dozens of television crews broadcast live reports and interviews. More than 370 statements made by representatives of Member States were scanned and distributed electronically to the media. During the same period, 118 press attachés collected special passes from the Department to allow them to escort national press and official photographers and camera operators to bilateral meetings and other events taking place in restricted areas of United Nations Headquarters.

58. From October 2013 to January 2014, the Department's Media Accreditation and Liaison Unit provided accreditation to 462 media representatives and continued to assist the press with their coverage of United Nations activities. It continued to disseminate information about United Nations events through its daily media alert, which is disseminated electronically by e-mail to more than 4,000 recipients. It also sent alerts concerning meetings, press releases and key documents through its Twitter account, which targets the press and has more than 17,900 followers.

IV. United Nations website

A. Broadening partnerships to improve the online experience

59. The Department continued its efforts to enhance the United Nations website, in part by expanding the availability of content in all six official languages and harnessing advances in web technologies to facilitate access to information and improve user experience.

60. Utilizing an integrated approach in the presentation of materials related to the general debate of the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly, the Department enhanced its dedicated web page, which provided easy access to texts, videos and audio files of all speakers (in all six official languages), as well as press releases and meeting summaries (in English and French).

61. Providing assistance to the Office of the President of the General Assembly, the Department used web content management technologies to upgrade the President's website in all six official languages.

62. As part of its ongoing work in support of United Nations campaigns and observances, the Department produced a special website marking the twentieth anniversary of OHCHR (in all six official languages) and completed a major redesign of the site for the Secretary-General's Millennium Development Goals Advocacy Group. Other projects included the development of multilingual web pages featuring the campaign for World Humanitarian Day 2013 ("Remember the fallen"); the upcoming twentieth anniversary of the Rwanda genocide (a multimedia site with an interactive timeline); the International Day of Charity; and the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. On the latter campaign, as a result of the Department's collaboration with UN-Women and Google, a special logo on the search engine's home page was linked to a landing page developed by the Department in all six official languages. The arrangement resulted in an increase in daily traffic to the page of more than 1,000 per cent. The Department is identifying other opportunities to work with Google to boost traffic to web pages containing United Nations content.

63. Working with United Nations agencies, the Department developed a large website in English, French and Spanish for the joint European Union-United Nations partnership project on natural resources management ("Land, natural resources and conflict: from curse to opportunity").

64. The Department continued to work on enhancing web accessibility and collaborated with the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management to support the establishment of a website for the Accessibility Centre, including providing technical and language support for versions in five official languages (Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian and Spanish) and managing its launch on the United Nations website.

65. The Department is working closely with the Office of Information and Communications Technology to upgrade the look and usability of the main United Nations web pages.

B. Multilingualism

66. To expand the availability of content in all six official languages, the Department created more than 700 new pages and updated another 9,000 web pages in Arabic. It created 1,020 new web pages and updated more than 5,000 pages in Chinese. In addition, 52 existing English-language websites were replicated in Chinese (including the United Nations portal site for humanitarian issues; feature sites on air, soil and water pollution; as well as gateway sites for United Nations funds, entities and bodies, such as the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Capital Development Fund, the United Nations Volunteers programme, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the International Trade Centre).

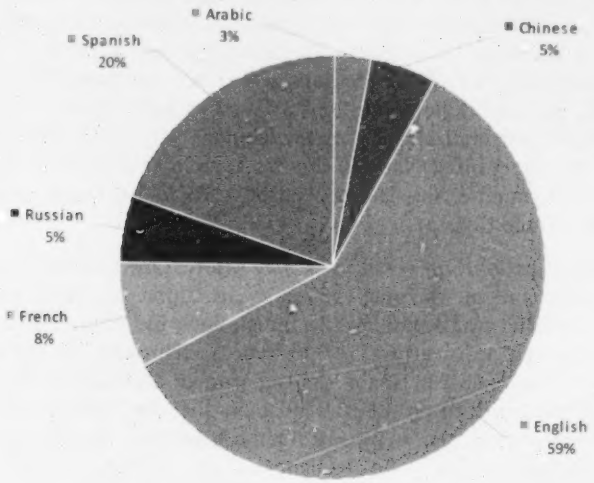
67. Partnerships with universities proved fruitful in establishing greater language parity of web content. Suzhou University in China provided more than 113,000 words of pro bono translation, while translations by other Chinese volunteers and interns amounted to nearly 251,000 words. Through an agreement with the University of Salamanca in Spain, the Department arranged for Spanish translations of some 79,000 words of online content, including the United Nations peacekeeping *Year in Review* portal; the web page for the high-level meeting in September 2013 on nuclear disarmament; the website of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development; the United Nations climate change website; the Millennium Development Goals website; and the website of the Envoy of the Secretary-General on Youth. Efforts continued to improve the amount of French-language content with the creation of 350 new pages and over 12,000 web page updates in that language. Collaboration with Minsk State Language University in Belarus allowed the Department to improve its Russian-language web content, with some 200 new web pages being produced. Additional partnerships are now being negotiated with Saint Petersburg State University to provide ongoing support for the greater availability of Russian content on the United Nations website.

68. The Department's efforts to expand the availability of content on the United Nations website in all six official languages appear to be bearing fruit: an analysis of web traffic shows a shift towards greater consumption of non-English content (a 3 per cent increase compared with the previous period). Overall, the website attracted more visitors in 2013 (nearly 59 million) than in the previous year (just over 50 million) (see the table below).

United Nations website traffic by language, 1 January-31 December 2013

Language	*New visits*	*Total visits*	*Unique visits*	*Page views*	*Pages per visit*
Arabic	1 301 606	1 778 182	1 321 110	4 128 987	2.32
Chinese	2 067 909	2 786 689	2 115 796	6 973 622	2.50
English	20 018 855	32 750 675	20 467 817	84 546 672	2.58
French	2 866 533	4 489 840	2 952 104	11 381 909	2.54
Russian	2 376 429	3 620 406	2 434 170	7 374 976	2.04
Spanish	9 339 186	13 533 722	9 927 984	27 896 932	2.06
Total	**37 970 518**	**58 959 514**	**39 218 981**	**142 303 098**	**2.34**

Figure IV
United Nations website page views by language, 1 January-31 December 2013



V. Conclusion

69. The Department will continue to strive to meet the growing demand for United Nations-branded products. It will expand partnerships further to distribute as widely as possible its multimedia and multilingual content, using traditional media and new platforms, with a special focus on finding previously untapped audiences through innovative partnerships. As the public changes the way it consumes information, the Department also seeks ways to meet these new needs.

70. Moving forward, the Department will aim to ensure more training for its content producers to create more multi-skilled teams, taking advantage of the new technologies made available as part of the capital master plan. As the lines between the production and consumption of audio, web and video content increasingly blur, the Department will seek to adapt by organizing capacity around languages to allow for creative solutions towards language parity and increased efficiencies.

71. As it looks to the future, the Department remains focused on not forgetting the past. The Department will continue to seek partnerships with Member States, institutions and private donors to digitize the audiovisual archives in the most cost-effective way possible and ensure that this heritage will be preserved for generations to come. A proposed strategy for the digitization of the archives is included in the annex to the present report.

Annex

Strategy for the digitization of the United Nations audiovisual archives for long-term preservation, access and sustainable management

Background

The Multimedia Resources Unit of the Department of Public Information is the caretaker of a unique collection of audiovisual resources representing the almost 70 years of the United Nations. The collection also includes material from the League of Nations. It is estimated that the collection contains 37,500 hours of film and video, 800,000 photographs and some 55,000 hours of audio recordings. These assets constitute the audiovisual heritage of our shared history. They cover a wide range of themes and events, capturing not only the work of the United Nations around the world, including its rich diplomatic history, but also the peoples and times in which they lived. The holdings include interventions by Heads of State, government leaders, envoys and other dignitaries, as well as the Department's own audiovisual production.

The renovation of the United Nations Headquarters facilities in New York, known as the capital master plan, has provided an opportunity for the United Nations to implement state-of-the-art broadcast facilities and conference services. The new broadcast centre, operational since 2013, includes in its core the recently acquired media assets management system, which can support in part the migrated material from tape-based to file-based digital television and radio recording, production, distribution and medium-term archiving.

The Department has made extensive efforts to seek extrabudgetary resources for the digitization of historical audiovisual archives. Fundraising proposals have been presented to interested Member States, international broadcasters, foundations and other entities. In addition, there have been collaborative initiatives with professional organizations and national archives.

Challenge

In the past, the Department carried out a comprehensive inventory and review of the Organization's holdings to assess their value and physical condition. As is the case with audiovisual resources worldwide, the United Nations audiovisual collection is facing acute challenges that threaten its sustainable management, accessibility and preservation for future generations. Those problems are related to:

- Inadequate resources for managing the collection effectively
- Substandard environmental conditions for long-term preservation
- Lack of resources for disaster preparedness specific to audiovisual records
- Lack of resources for a strategic digitization programme for long-term preservation
- Obsolescence, deterioration and natural decay of existing media formats
- Lack of funding for maintenance of existing playback equipment
- Inadequate staff capacity for maintenance and long-term preservation

While the media assets management system can support in part the migrated material and offer the timely search and retrieval of multimedia assets, the United Nations audiovisual heritage must first be properly digitized, catalogued and indexed. This process must take into account long-term preservation standards and formats. All related metadata must be complete, free of errors, and accurate for a full realization of the system's potential. The system is equipped for storage only for the short and medium term. It is not designed as a long-term archival solution.

While efforts towards collaborative arrangements have not yet yielded results, the Department will continue to seek creative partnerships that will bring the funding or technical expertise necessary for the sustainable management of the Organization's audiovisual archives.

However, it is a race against time: it is estimated that analog media will not be accessible within 10 to 15 years. Therefore, if efforts are not undertaken now to keep the contents safe through digitization for their long-term preservation, this heritage may be lost forever.

To address the need for preservation and provide access to its contents, the United Nations must invest as soon as possible in the proper digitization of its audiovisual heritage.

Strategy

This strategy aims to invest in the areas that need urgent support with a view to preservation and accessibility and a sustainable and sound management of the United Nations multimedia resources in the short and long term. The proposed actions are targeted at:

- Funding for the mass digitization of the audiovisual collection
- Funding for hiring temporary expertise of professional audiovisual archivists and support personnel to help with cataloguing, indexing and quality control of metadata and available documentation related to the United Nations audiovisual heritage

The Department has developed a detailed funding proposal for the mass digitization of the audiovisual collections based on a number of initiatives that could be funded separately. The proposal is available upon request.

Impact and expected outcomes

Access to the United Nations collection will enable Member States, journalists, historians, film-makers, non-governmental organizations, academia and the public at large to learn, through multimedia assets, about critical moments in humankind's contemporary history. These include the founding of the first truly global organization; the cold war; the birth of many independent nations; and many other milestones in peace and security, human rights, and the economic and social development of the world.

Among other benefits, the digitization of the collection would:

- Make historical video and audio collections easily available globally. Tapes currently have to be sent from New York at a considerable cost in terms of research time, duplication, shipping and handling. Digitization would make it

possible for a researcher in Africa, for example, to view and download video and audio at no additional cost to the United Nations.

- Allow for the off-site storage of original archival films, video and audio tapes in a climate-controlled environment to preserve the master copies, rather than in expensive yet inadequate space at United Nations Headquarters.
- Improve productivity and effectiveness through fast and easier access to multimedia assets and delivery through the Internet, as well as more traditional distribution and broadcasting methods.
- Enable the United Nations to provide better and faster access through digital copies while preserving the integrity and authenticity of the originals. It means less handling of the original analog copies, which will help to preserve them in the long term should they be needed again.
- Enable information managers, librarians and archivists to more efficiently catalogue, index and manage metadata related to the multimedia assets, which are crucial for the effective retrieval and preservation of those assets.
- Enable United Nations television, radio and multimedia producers to more efficiently access audiovisual assets necessary for news and media production, as well as background historical material to enhance their news stories and provide a richer user experience with historical reference to archival materials.

Action points

1. **Mass digitization of the collection selectively based on predefined criteria**. The digitization of the collections should be determined by demand, preservation needs and the value of the various collections. The mass digitization approach could also be accomplished by digitizing selected series and smaller collections. A master preservation copy of the digital output should be available on the highest resolution possible. A working copy (production copy) of the digital files that meets minimum standards for audio, film and video is also needed, as is a browsing copy in low resolution. The media assets management system, integrated with a long-term digital component, as well as standard policies and procedures, may be used as the main platform for the management of the digitized assets. New "born-digital" material would follow the system's production standards.

2. **Investment in staff capacity and training**. Investment in the existing United Nations staff capacity is required for the effective management of the audiovisual collection and improvement of current services and products. Therefore, the need for staff to be allocated or hired to help appraise, select, catalogue, index and develop the digital collection is an urgent need as well. To learn about best practices in the industry, staff development could be enriched with technical visits to and information exchanges with audiovisual archives of institutions and broadcast companies.

3. **Quality control of metadata related to legacy audiovisual collections**. The digitization of the audiovisual assets will not, by itself, resolve the problems inherent to this media type. Access and preservation can happen only with accurate, complete and error-free metadata. Other primary sources of information about the United Nations audiovisual collections, such as scripts, production files, copyright release documents, shot lists and printed catalogues, must be harvested for the

effective description of the audiovisual heritage and retrieval of its contents. An audiovisual item without a minimum description of its contents has no value. Therefore, the legacy metadata related to the audiovisual assets held by the Department need to be revised and completed for their effective migration into the media assets management system.

4. **Maintenance of off-site facilities and environmental conditions for the effective management of the collection**. The protection of the analog collection from damage and ongoing deterioration is a high priority as well. It requires funding for the management of the collection in the current off-site location with standard environmental conditions to preserve and access audiovisual archives.